

RETAIL PRICES - MARCH QUARTER, 1947.

ALL ITEMS - "C" SERIES.

Index numbers for retail prices of all items ("C" Series) for March quarter, 1947 (with base 1000 in 1923-1927 in the six State Capitals) were:- Brisbane 1123, Toowoomba 1139, Rockhampton 1126, Townsville 1172, Bundaberg 1107, and Warwick 1123.

The figures show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increase in March Quarter, 1947.

City.		From Year Ended	From March	From December
		June, 1939.	Quarter, 1946.	Quarter, 1946.
		%	%	%
Brisbane	30.1	3.9	1.2
Toowoomba	33.8	4.0	1.2
Rockhampton	30.8	3.7	1.4
Townsville	28.5	4.4	1.4
Bundaberg	31.6	4.3	1.6
Warwick	36.6	4.5	1.4

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increase in March Quarter, 1947.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year	From Decr.	From Year	From Decr.	From Year	From Decr.
	Ended June, 1939.	Quarter, 1946.	Ended June, 1939.	Quarter, 1946.	Ended June, 1939.	Quarter, 1946.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane	21.3	4.2	84.4	-1.5	21.1	1.0
Toowoomba	32.6	4.4	82.0	-1.2	20.7	1.0
Rockhampton	20.4	4.6	82.0	-1.3	22.8	1.1
Townsville	19.1	4.2	83.9	-0.8	20.6	0.8
Bundaberg	22.4	4.7	81.2	-1.2	18.5	1.2
Warwick	27.7	4.8	83.4	-1.6	23.2	0.9

FOOD AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) - "B" SERIES.

Index numbers for food and rent only ("B" Series) for March Quarter 1947 (with base 1000 in 1923-1927 for the six State Capitals) were:- Brisbane 968, Toowoomba 992, Rockhampton 959, Townsville 1029, Bundaberg 937, and Warwick 948.

From December Quarter 1946 to March Quarter 1947, the "B" Series Index showed increases in Brisbane, 2.8%, Toowoomba, 2.8%, Rockhampton, 3.1%, Townsville, 2.8%, Bundaberg, 3.3%, and Warwick, 3.4%.

The increases were caused chiefly by rises in the prices of meat, tea, and eggs.

The rent index increased 0.1% in Brisbane and 0.7% in Warwick, but remained stationary in all other towns.

Compared with March Quarter, 1946, the "B" Series index increased in Brisbane, 4.2%, Toowoomba, 4.0%, Rockhampton, 4.7%, Townsville, 4.4%, Bundaberg, 5.0%, and Warwick, 5.3%.

The rent index showed no movement in Toowoomba, but increases were recorded in Brisbane, 0.1%, Rockhampton, 1.2%, Townsville, 0.1%, Bundaberg, 0.6%, and Warwick, 0.7%.

CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR, AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

Clothing and Footwear prices rose steadily during the early years of the last war, until they were about 75 per cent. above their pre-war level by June, 1943. The "Price Ceiling" policy was introduced early in 1943, and the clothing and footwear index declined slightly from June Quarter 1943 to September Quarter 1945, when it again commenced to rise. In the fifteen months to December 1946, clothing and footwear prices rose above the September 1945 level by 9.2 per cent. in Brisbane, and by similar amounts in the other cities. The decline which occurred in the March Quarter 1947 was due to a reduction of Sales Tax on most clothing items.

Miscellaneous items were nearly 20 per cent. above their pre-war price level by June 1943, and have remained fairly steady since that date. The increase of about 1 per cent. in the March Quarter 1947 is the largest quarterly increase in this part of the index since December Quarter 1942, and was due to an increase in the price of tobacco and cigarettes.

COMPARISON OF COSTS IN QUEENSLAND CITIES.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in March Quarter, 1947, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase
Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	0.
Toowoomba ..	1.	0.	3.	1.	0.	9.	19.	11.		19.	9.	
Rockhampton ..	1.	0.	1.	1.	0.	9.	18.	0.		1.	0.	1.
Townsville ..	1.	0.	10.	1.	1.	11.	1.	0.	1.	1.	0.	3.
Bundaberg ..		19.	9.	1.	1.	3.	15.	9.		19.	11.	
Warwick ..	1.	0.	0.	1.	0.	10.	17.	4.		19.	9.	

BASIC WAGE RATES IN STATE CAPITAL CITIES.

The table on page 3 shows the Retail Price Index Number ("C" Series) for each of the six Capital Cities for the March Quarter of 1947 and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State industrial tribunals respectively. The fourth column shows the amounts which would be required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State Basic Wage in its own Capital City. The differences between these amounts and the State Basic Wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland Basic Wage over each of the other State Basic Wages.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates -
March Quarter, 1947.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series) March, 1947.	Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males.	State Court Basic Wage for Males.	Equivalent at Brisbane Prices, of each State Basic Wage.	Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage.
	Index.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane ..	1123	5. 4. 0.	5. 8. 0.	5. 8. 0.	- -
Sydney ..	1192	5. 10. 0.	5. 10. 0.	5. 3. 8.	4. 4.
Melbourne ..	1159	5. 7. 0.	5. 7. 0.	5. 3. 8.	4. 4.
Adelaide ..	1137	5. 3. 0.	5. 3. 0.	5. 1. 9.	6. 3.
Perth ..	1136	5. 3. 0.	5. 7. 1.	5. 5. 10.	2. 2.
Hobart ..	1152	5. 4. 0.	5. 4. 0.	5. 1. 5.	6. 7.

In December, 1946, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court awarded an interim basic wage increase. The new interim basic wage was determined on the same principles as had been used for the existing basic wage, except that, in determining the "needs" portion of the wage, a new "Court" Index Number (Court Index-Second Series) was to be used. This index number was derived by multiplying the "C" Series Index Number by .087, instead of .081, as heretofore. The effect is to equate the "needs" wage to the equivalent of 86s.0d. instead of 81s.0d., in the Six Capital Cities during the period 1923 to 1927. To the "needs" wage was still to be added the existing "prosperity" loading, 6s.0d. in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, and 4s.0d. in the other States. The application of these principles gave an increase in the Commonwealth Basic Wage of 7s.0d. in all Capital Cities, except Hobart, where it was 6s.0d. These increases operated from 1st December 1946.

Following the Commonwealth Basic Wage rise, State Basic Wages were increased as follows:- Brisbane, 7s.0d. (from 23rd December, 1946); Sydney and Melbourne, 7s.0d. (from 1st December, 1946); Hobart, 6s.0d. (from 1st December, 1946); and Adelaide, 3s.6d. (from 7th January, 1947). The Western Australian State Court followed with an increase of 5s.0d., payable from the beginning of March, 1947.

The rise in the "C" Series Index Number during the quarter ended March, 1947, caused a "cost of living" addition of 1s.0d. to the Commonwealth Basic Wage in Brisbane and Adelaide and 2s.0d. in Sydney. The State Basic Wage in Brisbane received an increase of 1s.0d., while Sydney and Adelaide State Basic Wages (which adopt Commonwealth rates) received increases of 2s.0d. and 1s.0d. respectively.

S. E. SOLOMON.

ACTING GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

BRISBANE,

21st May, 1947.

RETAIL PRICES INDEX.

Table No. 1.

THE "ALL ITEMS" INDEX - "C" SERIES.
(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

CITY.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended March, 1947.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				March, 1946.	June, 1946.	September, 1946.	December, 1946.	March, 1947.
Brisbane ..	917	863	1104	1081	1090	1092	1110	1123
Toowoomba ..	906	851	1118	1095	1101	1106	1125	1139
Rockhampton ..	903	861	1106	1086	1092	1093	1111	1126
Townsville ..	1023	912	1148	1123	1129	1135	1156	1172
Bundaberg ..	(b)	841	1085	1061	1070	1073	1090	1107
Weighted Average Five Cities (a)	915	864	1107	1084	1093	1095	1114	1127
Warwick ..	914	822	1099	1075	1080	1085	1108	1123

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 2.

FOOD, GROCERIES AND RENT (4 AND 5 ROOMED HOUSES) INDEX - "B" SERIES.
(Base = 1000 in 1923-1927 in Six State Capitals.)

CITY.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended March, 1947.	QUARTERS ENDED -				
				March, 1946.	June, 1946.	September, 1946.	December, 1946.	March, 1947.
Brisbane ..	901	852	942	929	933	925	942	968
Toowoomba ..	833	821	965	954	952	950	965	992
Rockhampton ..	858	837	930	916	916	913	930	959
Townsville ..	1047	916	999	986	983	984	1001	1029
Bundaberg ..	(b)	799	908	892	896	892	907	937
Weighted Average Five Cities (a)	892	851	945	933	935	929	945	972
Warwick ..	841	768	916	900	900	899	917	948

(a) Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

(b) Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 3.

AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES - FOOD AND GROCERIES.
BRISBANE.

Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	MONTH OF -		Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	MONTH OF -	
		Decr., 1946.	March, 1947.			Decr., 1946.	March, 1947.
	d.	d.	d.		d.	d.	d.
Bread .. 2 lb.	5.33	5.50	5.50	Oats - flaked 1 1/2 lb.	3.57	4.13	4.21
Flour .. 2 lb.	3.73	4.09	4.09	Milk .. 1 qt.	6.00	7.10	7.10
Tea .. 1 lb.	26.99	27.05	33.00	Beef - Sirloin			
Sugar .. 1 lb.	3.98	3.93	3.93	Roast .. 1 lb.	8.73	14.00	13.50
Jam (Plum) 1 1/2 lb.	8.02	12.18	11.82	Beef - Steak			
Raisins .. 1 lb.	10.57	12.91	12.91	Rump .. 1 lb.	11.34	18.00	19.50
Potatoes 7 lb.	14.88	8.37	8.42	Beef - Steak			
Onions .. 1 lb.	2.93	3.25	3.32	Chuck .. 1 lb.	5.83	9.00	9.00
Soap .. 1 lb.	6.20	6.94	6.93	Beef - Rolled			
Butter .. 1 lb.	19.00	19.82	19.86	Brisket 1 lb.	5.48	9.00	9.50
Cheese .. 1 lb.	13.28	15.14	15.14	Mutton - Leg 1 lb.	7.75	10.00	11.50
Eggs .. 1 doz.	19.69	22.00	27.91	Mutton - Chops			
				Loin .. 1 lb.	7.78	10.00	11.50